# Fight against fraud and protection of the Community's financial interests. Working programme 1997-1998, 1996 Report

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The Council adopted conclusions in which it welcomed the Commission’s presentation of an annual report and work programme on protecting the Communities’ financial interests and fighting fraud. It stressed the need for closer cooperation between the Member States and the Commission in combating organised crime. The Council considered it necessary to consolidate the implementation of the legal instruments already in place and stressed the importance of early ratification of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities’ financial interests and of other instruments approved by the Council. It believed that such instruments needed to be made tougher through provisions for prosecuting and punishing fraudulent acts. The Council fully endorsed the six priority themes presented by the Commission in its work programme and therefore called on the Commission to submit as soon as possible all useful proposals in the various areas of activity.